

Integration Nation



# Integration

- BritainThinks conducted four focus groups for British Future, in Leeds and Farnham to better understand public attitudes towards integration.
  - There was an even male/female split amongst participants and a spread of ages between 21-65.
  - Participants' attitudes were screened in advance - all had moderate attitudes on the issues surrounding British identity and immigration
  - There were 4 BME participants in Farnham and 6 in Leeds.
- Participants were asked to complete a combination of unprompted and prompted exercise on the topic of integration in the UK.
- From these, there emerged three tiers of behaviour which are necessary to achieve integration

# Three tiers of integration:

1

## **Day to day personal behaviours**

This is the basic requirement of any immigrant - not only to be seen to be integrating effectively, but even to justify being in the country.

- Learn English
- Abide by our laws
- Get a job
- Join in with the community
- Make friends outside the ethnic group

2

## **Understanding and respect for British national identity**

The next stage of integration beyond the “correct” behaviours is in attitudes - respecting British ways.

- Respect and accept British social values - don't try to impose own values
- Understand British history and heritage

3

## **Personal adoption of British national identity**

After understanding and accepting British national identity, the final stage to integration is for immigrants to actually adopt these beliefs themselves. This is seen as a lowest priority of the three, but the most indicative of real, “full” integration.

- Being proud of the national anthem and national flags
- Fully participating in national celebrations, public holidays
- Wearing a poppy for Remembrance Day

Whilst the previous two tiers emerged spontaneously by participants, this third level was only discussed after prompting.



# 1 Day to day personal behaviours

- “Learn English” came out top - virtually every respondent mentioned it
  - This is the building block for every other component of integration
  - Many had negative anecdotes of personal experiences of immigrants who don’t have a good level of English
- The second most frequent behaviour was to respect and obey British law
  - Again, this was against the backdrop of concerns that many immigrants don’t do so
  - This was also closely linked to concerns about the introduction of Sharia Law - the perception that (particularly Muslim) immigrants are attempting to impose their own legal systems
- The third element was about socialising outside of their own ethnic communities
  - Making friends and contact with neighbours locally
  - “Joining in” with the community
  - This came against the backdrop of frequent concerns about “ghettos” and segregation

## 2 Understanding and respect for British national identity

- The second tier of integration is built around beliefs and attitudes: respect, understanding, tolerance
  - Of British customs, values, traditions and history
- Only after immigrants have understood and demonstrated respect for British culture then they should start to bring their own values
  - This is the point at which the host community should show the same attitudes of tolerance and respect back to immigrant groups
  - A commonly cited example of this was new foods/cuisines. However, immigrants should never challenge more “important” structures - such as religion or legal frameworks
- A distinction is drawn here between different groups - many felt that it is easiest for ex-Empire subjects or Christian countries to reach this level of integration
  - These groups have stronger understanding of British history and culture
  - Muslim immigrants are seen as the group with the highest barriers to overcome

## 3 Adoption of British national identity

- Participants felt that it was only after the previous two tiers of integration had been achieved that immigrants can then themselves adopt their own British national identity, becoming truly “one of us”
- The strongest proofs of this national identity were seen to be:
  - Understanding British history
  - Supporting national sports teams
  - Being proud of national flags
  - Wearing a poppy for Remembrance Sunday
  - Enjoying British culture (food, music, TV, etc)
  - Being proud of the Royal Family

It's important to remember that immigrants can't jump straight to the third tier, without mastering the first two...